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Sprite Films™ Unveils Surprise Ending for One Refreshingly Talented Filmmaker

Elon University Graduate Dean Coots Scores a Double Win with His Short Film "Break the Night"

ATLANTA--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Break dancers + paint + a soundtrack remix = an award-winning short film for *Sprite Films*™ finalist Dean Coots. After careful consideration from a panel of film industry professionals and public online polling, *Sprite Films* has its first double winner in the program's history. As one of four filmmaker finalists, Elon University graduate Dean Coots wins both the Green Ribbon Panel and Fan Favorite Awards in the 2013 *Sprite Films* nationwide film competition.

The Green Ribbon Panel critiqued the technical aspects of the four short films that were developed from script-to-screen by student filmmaker finalists from participating colleges and universities including Columbia College Chicago, Savannah College of Art and Design and University of California, Los Angeles. Inspired by an aspect of urban culture, "Break the Night" was written and directed by Coots and produced by Michael Tahan. The short film takes the first place Green Ribbon Panel Award and Coots wins a \$30,000 contract job to work alongside *Sprite* and The Coca-Cola Company brand executives to develop content.

America voted for their favorite of the *Sprite Films* finalist shorts at *Sprite.com* and selected "Break the Night" as the Fan Favorite Award winner. Coots wins a special trip to attend AFI Fest, the America's Film Institute's (AFI) film festival – an annual celebration of international cinema from modern masters and emerging filmmakers – Nov. 7-14, 2013 in Los Angeles. *Sprite* is also donating \$5,000 to the film department at Elon University where Coots recently graduated with a bachelor of arts in cinema studies.

"You like me, you really like me!" said Coots, who hails from Darien, Conn. "I am so glad 'Break the Night' could reach, entertain and move so many people. Working with *Sprite Films* has been a career shaping experience and winning both the Green Ribbon Panel and Fan Favorite Awards is just an unbelievable honor. I could not have won without the support of my friends, family, the team at Elon University, including Paul Castro and my exceptionally talented film crew. I am extraordinarily excited to continue my career with the opportunities these awards will undoubtedly bring."

The *Sprite Films* program was formerly the Coca-Cola® Refreshing Filmmaker's™ Award, which was presented annually by Coca-Cola beginning in 1998. In the program's inaugural year, Paul Castro was a student filmmaker finalist who has since become a professional screenwriter, a full-time faculty member in the film department at University of California, Los Angeles and today, a professor of cinema in the School of Communications at Elon University. This past year, Professor Castro provided one-on-one guidance in the 2013 *Sprite Films* script entry and editing process with many of his Elon students including Coots.

"The *Sprite Films* program champions world-class education and empowers the next generation of cinematic storytellers," said Professor Castro. "As a past participant, it is so

gratifying and meaningful to see one of my students win today. As a writer and director, Dean Coots is a rare talent and a humble warrior indeed. His raw talent, coupled with our turbocharged Elon University student film crew, was nothing shy of miraculous. The result of that cohesive collaboration was a compelling short film. We are all very grateful for the opportunity provided by *Sprite Films*."

Sprite Films spotlighted the 2013 program and the finalist filmmakers in movie theaters across the country in August with consumer-facing promotional materials such as branded cups, popcorn bags and theatre displays.

"The *Sprite Films* program engages the next generation of creative minds with a rare opportunity to learn valuable on-set experience while providing a nationwide platform to express their authentic points-of-view," said Kimberly Paige, Assistant Vice President, *Sprite*. "We recognize the need for programs that offer young filmmakers across the country with the chance to create a film masterpiece from beginning to end. Dean Coots answered the challenge and today joins a renowned group of past *Sprite Films* winners who will undeniably go on to make their self-expression known in the world of film."

About The Coca-Cola Company

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The Coca-Cola Company

Kerry Tressler, +01 404.676.2683

ketressler@coca-cola.com

or

Tara Moore

Rogers & Cowan

tmoore@rogersandcowan.com

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